



ASPATRIA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the Year 1895.





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ASPATRIA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1895.

GENTLEMEN,

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Board, I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1895.

In comparing the vital statistics with those of the preceding year, it will be seen that while our mortality from infectious disease is lower, being in fact *nil*, our general and infant death rates both show a slight increase. In the matter of births, too, there is a slight falling off as compared with the previous year.

If reference be made to table A, which accompanies my report, and classifies the deaths according to diseases and ages, it will be shown that 47 deaths occurred during the year, from all causes, and are equal to an annual rate of mortality of 15.6 per 1,000. This compares a little unfavourably with the previous year, when we had 40 deaths and an annual rate of 13.3. This increase I attribute to the number of old people who succumbed, for I find that up to the age of 65 years, the number of deaths during the two years correspond very evenly, while in persons over that age, we have an increase of ten over the previous year.

The year upon which I report, seems to have been particularly fatal to the aged, both in Rural and Urban Districts. In our own parish, 16 deaths have resulted in persons over 75 years, and several of these were beyond 80.

Sixteen deaths occurred under 1 year of age, Four between the ages of 1 and 5, Two between 5 and 15, Two between 15 and 25, Four between 25 and 65, and Nineteen in persons over 65 years. The number of deaths under 1 year is—as was the case in the previous one—almost one third of the total number, and is represented by an infantile rate of 145 to every 1,000 births, as compared with 125 in the previous year.

This is certainly higher than it ought to be, and higher than that of the Urban Districts in the County of Cumberland in 1894, viz., 130.9, and we may reasonably ask what are the causes which combine to produce such slaughter of the innocent? Why should one child in every seven born, die before the age of one year is reached? The causes are, I believe, in the main, three—ignorance in feeding, too early marriages, and intemperance.

Referring again to table A we shall find the different diseases assigned as the cause of death. Five have been the result of Phthisis or Consumption, 6 due to diseases of the Respiratory Organs, 4 to Heart Disease, 1 to Burns, and 31 to various other causes.

It is most gratifying to find that from infectious or zymotic disease no death has occurred, therefore our zymotic rate of mortality is *nil*.

The highest number of deaths occurred during the second quarter of the year, and reached 15; in the first and last there were 11, and 10 in the third.

BIRTHS.—111 births took place during the year, 57 males and 54 females; these are equal to an annual birth rate of 37 per 1,000. In the previous year 120 births were registered, equal to an annual rate of 40 per 1,000.

The amount of sickness during the year has been unusually small, and this is especially true with respect to zymotic disease.

We commenced the year with an outbreak of Influenza, cases of which continued to appear to the end of March. The outbreak, however, never attained the magnitude of an epidemic, nor was it attended by any

fatalities. Indeed, as compared with the type of the malady which prevailed in former years, it seemed to have lost its sting. Till the end of September, we were quite free from epidemics, when a Typhoid Fever case appeared in a cottage at Bower Bridge, and was followed by 8 others in the same neighbourhood, and in close proximity to the original one. Careful investigations were made as to the cause, and the conclusion arrived at that the disease had been contracted out of the district, by the man when at work. It was undoubtedly spread by the difficulties encountered in disposing of the excreta, owing to the cottages possessing no garden space in which to bury them. With few exceptions, the ash pits received the discharges of the patients, and your Council wisely determined, in the event of other cases supervening, to take steps to secure their being disposed of in the earth, after complete saturation with disinfectants. One of the cottages in which cases occurred was sadly overcrowded, and in all, the ash pit and privy accommodation was defective.

The water supply was derived from a well which was opened out and carefully examined, with the result that no contaminating influence was discovered. Disinfectants were liberally supplied, but I am sceptical as to their being on all occasions mixed with the discharges which were, I fear, too often thrown upon the ash pit midden, without being treated at all, and consequently polluted the surrounding atmosphere, and propagated the disease, which can only be prevented by the prompt removal of all discharges, so that neither air nor water may be contaminated by them.

During the last quarter of the year, several cases of Measles of a mild type appeared in different parts of the town, but nothing in the nature of an epidemic occurred, though such was the case in all the surrounding villages. It was not deemed necessary to close the School, nor did any fatal results ensue in any of the cases. No cases of Scarlet Fever or Diphtheria occurred during the year.

SANITATION.—Though no large schemes of sanitary reform has characterized the past year, still a good deal of useful work has been effected.

In January and February the huge and unwholesome cesspool, situated in White Horse Yard, and supposed to be the origin of the

Diphtheria cases which occurred at the end of 1894, was filled up, and the sanitary condition of the Yard improved. The ash pits here are very defective, in their present state, and in no way fulfil the requirements of your bye-laws. Indeed, I must again point out that many of these structures are most unsuitable and dangerous, and some, even in connection with new cottages, have been built without roofs, which is not in accordance with your rules, apart from health considerations. Every person in the parish with an insanitary ash pit, or one structurally defective, should be made to comply with your printed rules, or these become a myth and a fraud. Especially in the country, should the ash pits receive every attention, for, in many instances, they are the receptacles for the contents of the privy pail. They should all possess flagged or concreted floors, good roofs, and proper ventilation.

In March and April, several ash pits and privies belonging to 14 cottages at New Town and Springkeld were re-constructed and improved, and several notices were sent out for the building of proper ash pits.

In May, the cesspool at Prospect was cleaned out and generally overhauled, and the road channel improved by adding 50 yards of sewer pipes. The open ditch, too, along the Outgang Road, which receives a large amount of farm-yard liquid, was also improved during this month. In July, the old open channel, of which I have so often complained, situated in Crooke, was done away with and large sewer pipes substituted as an additional safeguard to the public well there, which was also well puddled all round.

In August, the question of a public water supply was discussed, but, as it was found on investigation that our village possesses 107 private wells with pumps, and six public ones, any additional supply was regarded as superfluous and unnecessary, more especially as no complaint has been urged as to the quality of the water of the different wells.

The month of October found us engaged with the drainage of New Town and Springkeld, when great improvements were effected, which will be instrumental in purifying the effluent on the railway slope.

In November and December, the sewerage outlets from Pringle Road were re-constructed, a cesspool made, and the sewer course altered and covered in for some distance.

Many other matters were brought before your Councel and received attention, whieh I cannot even touch upon in a report of this kind. Euough has been detailed to show that the year upon whieh I report is not one barren in sanitary efforts.

Much remains for the future. Many of the cottages in our district are old, dilapidated, destitute of proper conveniences, and unsuited for dwellings. In many placees there are no provisions for carrying away the dirty house water, which is thrown on the ground, and soaks into the soil close to and under the cottage. Then, as I previously said, the exereta are generally thrown into an ashpit near the house, or pass into a cesspit in the ground into which they soak, polluting both ground and water.

Ventilation, too, in many of our eottages is defective, and all should be compelled to provide windows whieh would open at the top, and admit of not less than two square feet of spaee in direct communication with the external air.

Many of the house drains are without trapped gullies, and many houses have no drainage worth the name. All should be compelled to provide traps and means for the disposal of slop water, which is too often flung into the street.

Some of the eow-houses and dairies do not reeeeive the attention they ought. Greater care should be exercised with respect to their drainage and water supply, as it is well known that both scarlet fever and typhoid may be spread by the milk, which is a very receptive fluid. These different improvements may be brought about by simple means, and without any serious addition to the rates, if we are vigilant and in earnest. *All* must be made to comply with your bye-laws, and aet up to them in their entirety. If this is done, it will assuredly ensure purity of the water, of the air, and the ground as effieiently and thoroughly as the most elaborate sewage schemes ever promulgated.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

W. P. BRIGGS.

TABLE A.

TABLE of DEATHS during the year 1895, in the ASPATRIA URBAN DISTRICT, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

Name of Locality adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities:—

ASPATRIA URBAN.**MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES:—**

At all Ages	47
Under 1 year	16
1 and under 5	4
5 and under 15	2
15 and under 25	2
25 and under 65	4
65 and upwards	19

MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.**PHTHISIS:—**

Under 5.....	2		5 and upwards.....	3
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BRONCHITIS, PNEUMONIA, AND PLEURISY:—

Under 5.....	3		5 and upwards.....	3
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HEART DISEASE:—

		5 and upwards.....	4
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INJURIES:—

Under 5.....	1			
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ALL OTHER DISEASES.

Under 5.....	14		5 and upwards.....	17
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Total	20	—	Total	27
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TABLE B.

Table of POPULATION, BIRTHS, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1895, in the ASPATRIA URBAN DISTRICT, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

Name of Locality adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities:—

ASPATRIA.**POPULATION AT ALL AGES:—**

Census, 1891.....	2,900
Estimated to middle of 1895	3,000
Registered Births.....	111

NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY, COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH:—**ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER:—**

Under 5.....	2	5 and upwards.....	7
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INFLUENZA:—

5 and upwards.....	20
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MEASLES:—

Under 5.....	9	5 and upwards.....	12
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Notification of Infectious Disease is Not Compulsory in the District. The Isolation Hospital used by the sick of the District is situated at Carlisle, 20 miles distant.

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